

SECLUSION AND PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS

The Board of Education recognizes that students sometimes exhibit inappropriate behaviors that impede learning. As a result, students may require unique approaches to discipline so that they can continue to benefit from their educational program. The Board further acknowledges that the use of aversive behavioral intervention, as defined in §19.5 of the Commissioner's Regulations, is prohibited unless the district has followed the procedures outlined below to allow for their use in a child-specific case.

The use of seclusion or physical restraint will be in conformance with a child's individual education program (IEP). Staff will adhere to federal and state statute and regulation in the administration of these measures.

Seclusion

Seclusion refers to the isolation of an individual from others, as in a confined space, and prevented from leaving the environment, usually by closing a door. Students are prohibited from being escorted or transported. Provisions may be made if other options have been exhausted and/or deemed otherwise unsafe. Seclusion/Time Out is an area for a student to safely deescalate, regain control and prepare to meet expectations to return to his/her educational program.

Physical Restraints

The purpose of this policy is to insure the safety of students and staff, inform parents of the possibility of children being restrained and specify under what circumstances restraints would be conducted. The definition of a physical restraint is individuals using minimal physical force necessary to reduce the likelihood of students inflicting harm to self and/or others. This may restrict or immobilize the ability of an individual to move his/her arms, legs or head fully.

Physical restraints to contain and /or control the behavior of students should only be used to ensure safety and protection. Physical restraints should only be employed as a safety response to acute physical behavior and their use is restricted to the following circumstances: the student, other students, staff members or others are at imminent risk of physical harm.

An informed consent process for the family or caretaker of the student should be in place in the event that any physical restraint is used with a student.

Physical intervention should never increase (or create more) risk than the behavior is trying to contain. As any physical restraint involves some risk of injury to the student or staff, staff must weigh this risk against the risks involved in failing to physically intervene when it may be warranted.

Physical restraints should only be employed after other less intrusive approaches have been attempted unsuccessfully.

Physical restraints must only be employed for the minimum time necessary. Considerations for alternate interventions should be made following each fifteen to twenty minute period of physical interventions. They must cease when the student is judged to be safe and no longer at risk of self-injury or harming others.

Physical restraints may only be undertaken by staff who have successfully completed a comprehensive crisis management course fully endorsed by the school district that covers: crisis definition and theory; use of de-escalation techniques; crisis communication; anger management; physical restraint techniques; the legal, ethical, and policy aspects of their use; decision making related to physical restraints; debriefing strategies; signs of distress and effect on the student and how to monitor; identification of events and environmental factors that may trigger an emergency safety situation; instruction on the State and Board of Education policy on physical restraints; the effects of restraint on all students; and the needs and behaviors of the population being served. They must also have demonstrated competency in performing the intervention techniques, which is measured and documented according to relevant professional and state regulatory guidelines.

Although all staff will not be trained in physical restraints, all staff should be trained in safety concerns and documentation. The school policy on physical restraint will be reviewed with all staff. Untrained staff may not restrain children.

Only physical restraint skills that are taught in the comprehensive crisis management course and approved by the Plattsburgh City School District may be used. All techniques must be applied according to the guidelines provided in the training and in this policy.

Where possible, staff members must consult with peers and supervisors prior to initiating any physical restraint.

Two or more staff members should be involved in any physical restraint to help ensure safety and accountability. A nurse or medically trained person should be in attendance during any physical restraint to observe and monitor the student and staff for physical indicators of distress.

Students may not be permitted to restrain or to assist in the restraint of other students.

Following any incident involving physical restraint, the school must ensure that post-incident medical and follow up evaluation, debriefing and support is offered to the student, the staff members, and any other people involved in or witnesses of the episode. Staff members should provide the student with an explanation for the intervention and offer the student an opportunity to express his or her views on what transpired.

Any incidents of physical intervention must be recorded on incident report forms that reflect the stated policy and include details of the incident, the people involved, the preventive strategies that were employed, actual techniques used, any injuries sustained by the student or staff, and debriefing that was provided for the student. School administrators should review all such reports and appropriate action should be taken. Such reports shall be submitted monthly to the Director of Special Education. The data collection system should be used for a data-driven decision making process that concentrates on adjusting the systems to support the students and staff.

If any injuries are sustained to students and/or staff from the use of physical restraints, the details must be reported and reviewed.

References:

8 NYCRR §§200.15(f) and 200.22(d)
Adoption date: October 8, 2009
Revised: August 28, 2014